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ABSTRACT

This book presents a comprehensive collection of information concerning different forms of child care, the quality and availability of care, the functioning of the child care market, and programs that the government uses to support this market. Following an introduction that outlines the negative consequences of splitting education and child care, chapter 1 of the book explains why child care issues are important and describes some demographic trends that will increase the demand for child care. Chapter 2 discusses the current state of the child care system and its biggest problems, ranging from the difficulties parents face in finding child care to the poor information available on child care options. The benefits that child care, particularly high-quality care, can bring to business, parents, children, and society are discussed in chapter 3. Chapter 4 explores the cost of providing higher quality child care and the choices that this cost requires, and Chapter 5 explores the private and public sector responses to child care problems, as well as the public's ambivalence toward child care. Chapter 6 presents suggested guidelines for the Quality Early Childhood Model, which includes (1) a network of programs that emphasize both care and education; (2) community-based child and family resource centers; and (3) a community-wide leadership group that would help weave together existing programs and expand them where needed. (MM)

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